



3 Month Spending Extension

Congress passed the 34th short term fix since 2008 to federal highway funding in an 11th hour showdown between the House and the Senate on July 29th. The three month extension of funding and operating authority for the highway, transit, and highway safety programs transferred \$8 billion into the Highway Trust Fund. This transfer ensures there is enough revenue to keep the HTF solvent through the end of October. The President signed the bill July 31, averting a shutdown of the Federal surface transportation programs.



Lower level of the U.S. Capitol

Both the House and the Senate had introduced their own transportation funding legislation. The House focused on finding a temporary fix. Their version prevailed in this round and is tied to increasing citizen compliance with tax liability statements and transportation spending reductions. The House was looking to buy time for negotiations to continue over the long term funding for a full six year bill, which most likely would rely heavily on corporate tax reform.

The Senate bill is geared toward a longer term solution and remains on the table for consideration when Congress reconvenes. Called the DRIVE Act (Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy) the proposal seeks to re-authorize the highway, transit and highway safety programs for six years. The funding levels in the bill are a slight increase over current funding levels. However, it is important to note that the DRIVE Act only produces enough revenue to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent for the first three years of the bill (FY 2016 - 2018). The House was unwilling to agree to take up the Senate's bill.cont. on page 2

Colorado Community Meetings

Be part of a conversation with Governor Hickenlooper and his team about the issues affecting you, your community and our state.

Regional Meeting Schedule (tentative) :

- [August 20th: Montrose](#)
- [September 21st: Craig](#)
- [September 21st: Rifle](#)
- [September 23rd-26th: Southern Colorado](#)

For more information visit

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/governor>

Southeast TPR

The Southeast Transportation Planning Region (TPR) will be our focus this month as part of our ongoing series covering the Statewide plan. The Southeast TPR is a large region in Colorado bordering Kansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. It has a terrain of rolling plains, with temperatures that vary widely, from more than 100°F in the summer to sub-zero in the winter. Recent years of drought conditions have contributed to powerful dust storms that create low visibility and hinder mobility. The changing and sometimes severe weather creates the potential for road closures due to adverse weather conditions.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor—a 2,300-mile economic development corridor between Texas and Alberta, Canada—traverses the region along US 287 and is an important conduit for trade in and through the region.cont. on page 2

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The Southeast TPR has a relatively high volume of truck traffic (approximately 24 percent of vehicles on state highways are trucks). This is more than twice the statewide average of 9 percent and indicates the important role the Southeast TPR plays in a growing freight economy. Trucks make up almost 60 percent of the vehicles on US 287 between Eads and Wiley, Colorado, and truck traffic is expected to grow at a rate of 1.6 percent annually through 2040. The Ports-to-Plains Corridor has exceeded the predictions for truck traffic volumes. Due to their weight, trucks have much greater impacts on road conditions and maintenance needs. Freight rail is also a key mode for commodity import and export. Freight rail in the region includes the Victoria Southern, Cimarron Valley, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.



Cover of Upper Southeast 2040 RTP

As part of the public involvement component of the plan, 4,832 residents in the Southeast TPR were called on the phone and invited to participate in a discussion with local leaders and CDOT staff. This created a valuable connection with members of the public who might otherwise be uninvolved. A total of 820 people participated, both listening and commenting on the topics discussed. This exercise provided an opportunity to vet the work done by CDOT and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) with the broader public before proceeding to finalize important components of the Regional Transportation Plan. Below are some of the outcomes of the conversation with the public.

What is most important to you about transportation?	How should CDOT invest limited dollars?	What kinds of transportation improvements can best help the economy in your area?
46%: Safety	57%: Safety improvements	63%: Improving the pavement
31%: Economic Development	24%: Maintain the existing system	20%: Improving rail service

The full Statewide Transportation Plan can be found at www.ColoradoTransportationMatters.com. To locate all the regional plans click the Regional Transportation Plans tab.

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Colorado's Senators were able to secure some important positive changes to the bill. The Bennet/Gardner changes to the bill include a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) definition change that will make it easier to fund BRT in Colorado, restoring the Bus and Bus Facilities program, adequate Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program funding levels, and a change in the freight program formula for rapidly growing states like our own.

It is expected that the House and Senate will continue to negotiate a funded six year transportation authorization bill after the summer recess. The Senate's DRIVE Act will be a starting point, with expectations of additional (some potentially significant) policy changes from the House. CDOT will continue to monitor and provide input into this process.